United Nations A/60/475

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 November 2005

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 29

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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I. Introduction

1. At its 17th plenary meeting, on 20 September 2005, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixtieth session the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 10th to 12th and 16th meetings, from 17 to 19 and on 25 October 2005 (see A/C.4/60/SR.10-12 and 16). The Committee held a general debate on the item at its 11th and 12th meetings, on 18 and 19 October (see A/C.4/60/SR.11 and 12).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.[1]

4. At its 1st meeting, on 29 September, the Committee decided to establish a Working Group of the Whole on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, to be chaired by the delegation of Nigeria, to prepare a proposal to be submitted under item 29.

5. At the 10th meeting, on 17 October, the Chairman of the Fourth Committee made an introductory statement (see A/C.4/60/SR.10).

6. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space introduced the report of the Committee (see A/C.4/60/SR.10).

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/60/20 and Corr.1)

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7. Also at the 10th meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the expert on telemedicine from Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs made presentations (see A/C.4/60/SR.10).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/60/L.6

8. At the 16th meeting, on 25 October, the representative of Nigeria, in his capacity as Chairman of the Working Group of the Whole, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/C.4/60/L.6).

9. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/60/L.6 without a vote (see para. 11).

10. After the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of France made a statement (see A/C.4/60/SR.16).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

11. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999, 59/2 of 20 October 2004 and 59/116 of 10 December 2004,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,[1]

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,[2] and

[1] Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

[2] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3]

Taking note of the actions already taken as well as those to be embarked upon to further implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, as reflected in resolution 59/2 and the Plan of Action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[4]

Convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education, disaster management and environmental protection as well as other Earth observation applications contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, inter alia, poverty eradication,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-eighth session,[5]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-eighth session;[5]

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[6] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-fourth session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/116;[7]

4. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fifth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

(iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;

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[3] See resolution 55/2.

[4] A/59/174, chap. VI.B.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/60/20 and Corr.1).

[6] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/60/20 and Corr.1), chap. II.D.

(iv) Matters relating to:

a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;

b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(*b*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;[8]

(ii) Examination and review of the developments concerning the draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment;

(*c*) Consider the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects in accordance with the workplan adopted by the Committee;[9]

5. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fifth session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-sixth session, in 2007;

6. *Also notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (*a*) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fifth session, will reconvene its Working Group and review the need to extend the mandate of the Working Group beyond that session of the Subcommittee;

7. *Further notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (*a*) (iv) *a.* above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group on the item only to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space;

8. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (*c*) above, the Legal Subcommittee should reconvene its Working Group in accordance with the workplan adopted by the Committee;[9]

9. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/116;[10]

10. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

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[8] See resolution 47/68.

[9] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 199.

[10] Ibid., *Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/60/20 and Corr.1), chap. II.C.

(iii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(iv) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(*b*) Consider the following items in accordance with the workplans adopted by the Committee:[11]

(i) Space debris;

(ii) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

(iii) Space-system-based telemedicine;

(iv) Near-Earth objects;

(v) Space-system-based disaster management support;

(vi) International Heliophysical Year 2007;

(*c*) Consider the following single issue/item for discussion: examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

11. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Subcommittee, in 2007;

12. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the symposium to strengthen the partnership with industry should be organized during the first week of the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and should address synthetic aperture radar missions and their applications;

13. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 10 (*a*) (ii) and (iii) and 11 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

14. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 10 (*b*) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, should reconvene its Working Group on Space Debris to consider issues arising from its workplan and, in particular, the draft of the space debris mitigation document of the Subcommittee and that the Working Group should continue its intersessional work as required to expedite agreement on the document;[12]

15. *Further agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 10 (*b*) (ii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, should reconvene

[11] See A/AC.105/848, annex II, para. 6, for item (i); ibid., annex III, para. 8, for item (ii); *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 138, for item (iii); A/AC.105/848, annex I, para. 20, for item (iv); A/AC.105/823, annex II, para. 15 and A/AC.105/848, annex I, para. 21, for item (v) and A/AC.105/848, annex I, para. 22, for item (vi).

[12] See A/AC.105/848, annex II, para. 6.

its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space and that the Working Group should continue its intersessional work on the topics described in the multi-year workplan as amended by the Subcommittee at its forty-second session;[13]

16. *Agrees* that a joint technical workshop on the objectives, scope and general attributes of a potential technical safety standard for nuclear power sources in outer space should be organized together with the International Atomic Energy Agency and held during the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

17. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2006, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;[14]

18. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, entered into an affiliation agreement with the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and have continued their education programmes in 2005;

19. *Agrees* that the regional centres referred to in paragraph 18 above should continue to report to the Committee on their activities on an annual basis;

20. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2005;

21. *Also notes with satisfaction* the contribution being made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the efforts of Member States and the Office for Outer Space Affairs to promote and support the activities being organized within the framework of the International Heliophysical Year 2007;

22. *Further notes with satisfaction* that the Government of Ecuador will be hosting the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas in Quito in July 2006 and that the Government of Chile will organize a preparatory meeting for the Conference, with the support of the Government of Colombia, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, during the International Air and Space Fair, to be held in Santiago in March 2006;

23. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, in accordance with paragraph 21 of resolution 59/116, informed the Committee of its activities to implement the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias and the Plan of Action of the Conference;[15]

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[13] Ibid., annex III, para. 8.

[14] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/60/20 and Corr.1), paras. 88 and 94; see also A/AC.105/840, sects. II and III and annex III.

[15] See A/AC.105/L.261.

24. *Also notes with satisfaction* that the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with the Governments of Algeria and South Africa, will host the First African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology in November 2005 and that the Conference will, under the theme "Space: an indispensable tool for Africa's development", provide a forum to exchange information on global space activities for societal development and African needs, including capacity-building, to benefit from the applications of space science and technology and to consider how to strengthen the participation of Africa in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees;

25. *Further notes with satisfaction* that the Islamic Republic of Iran, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, hosted the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in September 2005;

26. *Recommends* that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

27. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

28. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

29. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

30. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare, as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development";[2]

31. *Reiterates* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention, in particular, of the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development and related fields and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and summits and for implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[3]

32. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, a report on the inclusion of the issue of the use of space technology in the reports submitted by the Secretary-General to those conferences and summits, and its inclusion in the outcomes and commitments of those conferences and summits;

33. *Notes with satisfaction* the increased efforts of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in carrying out actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation");[16]

34. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

35. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee and to report to the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work conducted at its annual sessions;

36. *Notes with satisfaction* that the open informal meetings, held in conjunction with the annual sessions of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and in which representatives of member States and observers in the Committee participate, provide a constructive mechanism for an active dialogue between the entities of the United Nations system and member States and observers in the Committee;

37. *Encourages* entities of the United Nations system to participate fully in the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities;

38. *Notes* that space technology could play a central role in disaster reduction and that both the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee could contribute to the implementation of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005;[17]

39. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter, the Committee could continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

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[16] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[17] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolutions 1 and 2.

40. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Committee would be establishing a closer link between its work to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development by contributing to the thematic areas that will be addressed by the Commission;

41. *Agrees* that the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat should be invited to participate in the sessions of the Committee to inform it how it could best contribute to the work of the Commission;

42. *Also agrees* that the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs should participate in the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development to raise awareness and promote the benefits of space science and technology for sustainable development;

43. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/2, by Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and augmentation system providers to establish an international committee on GNSS and by the ad hoc expert group established to study the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management;

44. *Welcomes* the fact that the Office for Outer Space Affairs could integrate into its programme of work a number of actions identified for implementation by the Office in the Plan of Action of the Committee for the further implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;[18]

45. *Notes* that some actions identified for implementation by the Office in the Plan of Action could only be integrated into its programme of work if additional staff and financial resources were provided;[19]

46. *Urges* all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to enhance the capacity of the Office to provide technical and legal advisory services and initiate pilot projects in accordance with the Plan of Action of the Committee, while maintaining the priority thematic areas agreed by the Committee;

47. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee" and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the System;

48. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-ninth session, its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

49. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-ninth session, under its agenda item entitled "Space and society" the special theme for the

[18] See A/AC.105/L.262.

[19] Ibid., para. 6.

focus of discussions for the period 2004-2006 "Space and education", in accordance with the workplan adopted by the Committee;[20]

50. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider, at its forty-ninth session, its agenda item entitled "Space and water";

51. *Also agrees* that a new item entitled "Recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society" should be included in the agenda of the Committee at its forty-ninth session, with a view to contributing to their implementation;

52. *Further agrees* that a symposium on space and forests should be held during the forty-ninth session of the Committee;

53. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Committee agreed to consider, at its forty-ninth session, under its agenda item "Other matters", the evolution of space activities and how to develop a long-term plan to strengthen the role of the Committee in international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space;[21]

54. *Notes* that in accordance with the agreement reached by the Committee at its forty-sixth session on the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[22] on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[23] the Group of African States, the Group of Eastern European States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and Other States nominated their candidates for the offices of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee, First Vice-Chair of the Committee, Chair of the Legal Subcommittee and Chair of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2006-2007;

55. *Urges* the Group of Asian States to nominate its candidate for the office of Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for the period 2006-2007 in time for the Subcommittee to begin its work at its forty-third session as scheduled;

56. *Agrees* that, upon the nomination of the candidate of the Group of Asian States for the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the two Subcommittees should elect their officers;

57. *Notes* that the Committee, at its forty-ninth session, would endorse the election of the officers of its Subcommittees and would elect its officers for the period 2006-2007;

58. *Also notes* that the Group of Western European and Other States nominated its candidate for the office of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee, for the period 2008-2009, at the forty-eighth session of the Committee, for its consideration;

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[20] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 239.

[21] Ibid., *Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/60/20 and Corr.1), paras. 316 and 317.

[22] Ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, paras. 4-9.

[23] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I; see also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.

59. *Further notes* that each of the regional groups has the responsibility to actively promote the participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the member States of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional groups, and agrees that the regional groups should consider this Committee-related matter among their members;

60. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the European Space Policy Institute;

61. *Urges* the Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimensions in space science and technology applications;

62. *Requests* entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.